



GLOBE STAR, LLC and Gentle Teaching

hand-in-hand, heart-to-heart

By **Mara Hawks**
photos by **Amber Crisp**

The Indiana agency Globe Star was established in 1996 as a provider of direct services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Areas of service include the cities of Chesterton, Warsaw, South Bend, and Indianapolis, with services reaching families in surrounding counties and rural locations.

Dr. Anthony (Tony) M. McCrovitz is Executive Director of Globe Star, LLC, and also of Quality-of-Life Institute, Inc., a nonprofit organization that supports the mission of Globe Star.

The primary purpose of the Institute is to add value to caregivers' quality of life with the support that lets them know they are appreciated by the Globe Star community.

Support for caregivers' quality of life ranges from practical (e.g., a car repair or voucher for personal care) to educational opportunities and the funding of certifications. Ongoing training is something the Institute also provides through workshops, mentoring support, and the support of one another in an organizational culture that learns through shared reflection and dialogue.

Balancing the day-to-day demands of caregiving is challenging. As an agency, Globe Star strives to demonstrably support its staff in their dedication to the individuals they are serving, and in their commitment to continuing education for their professional development and competence in providing quality of life services.

The media, materials, workshops, tools, and resources that are written, developed, and produced by Quality of Life Institute for Globe Star's staff, are also offered to direct service providers, agencies, and other organizations worldwide.

The philosophy, practice, and promise of Gentle Teaching is the heart of Globe Star's Quality of Life Model™ of services, finely woven into their motto, "mentoring a spirit of gentleness."

Rooted in principles of interdependence, the practice of Gentle Teaching creates companionship and a sense of community with others, cultivating a sense of belonging and a genuine feeling of being valued. The four pillars or main lessons of Gentle Teaching are: to feel safe; to feel loved; to feel and be loving; to feel and become engaged.

For individuals receiving quality of life services at Globe Star, a sense of belonging is nurtured and one's intrinsic motivation for learning is cultivated through mentoring a spirit of gentleness.

"Social-emotional learning can only occur when one feels safe and accepted without conditions," says Dr. McCrovitz.

"This is the cultural nature of human development that is shaped by our interactions with one another and by how we are able to experience a sense of belonging. A sense of belonging is the root of interdependency that shifts self-perception from isolation to inclusion."

In talking about the social vision of Gentle Teaching, McCrovitz further explains, "We can envision and engage in the unfolding of gifts and potentials only in proportion to the accessible means and opportunities provided us for exploring and

cultivating the roots of connection to self, to others, and to the world within and around us.”

At Globe Star, the “mentoring a spirit of gentleness” dynamic between the individual and their caregiver is paramount to the delivery of direct services. A framework of Gentle Teaching guides the formation of this relationship-building platform that engages one in self-awareness and in processes of learning companionship (other-awareness) and having a sense of community.

The mentoring environment unconditionally affirms one’s existence and sense of belonging, supporting one’s interactions with increased value and meaning for social well-being and quality of life. The integration of value and meaning into one’s life cultivates quality of life.

Mentoring a spirit of gentleness nurtures the unknowable capacity of individuals and their potential for making connections that support social-emotional learning processes.

Through the lens of Gentle Teaching, self-reflection and self-assessment exercises are essential to the caregiver’s mentoring role and for the planning of how they will teach the four main lessons. “How will connections be made? How can I understand this person and learn of their gifts and vulnerabilities? What am I communicating through my interactions, and how am I using my tools? How am I valuing and protecting this person? How will I create meaningful moments, develop dialogue, and invite engagement? How can I plan to stay the course that involves goals and reaching different destinations, while navigating the ebbing and flowing waters of social-emotional experiencing and processing, shifting one’s internal environment that surfaces as calm or turbulence?”

Mentoring aspects engage one in the dialogue and discovery of companionship and community, finding the way, together, for the emergence of one’s unique and resonant voice (verbal and non-verbal) and their unfolding, authentic narrative.

Mentoring a spirit of gentleness is a path of learning for social-emotional awareness and growth. It creates a deeper connection with

one’s self and a sense of responsibility for one’s own life, with the invitation to grow and move beyond limitations.

“They first see our presence,” a founder of Gentle Teaching, John McGee, would say. “Here are my words, and they connect with our eyes; here is my hand.”

Our tools for relationship building with Gentle Teaching are our hands, eyes, words, and presence. It’s important to have an understanding of what is being communicated and conveyed through the use of these tools as we are communicating and incorporating both verbal and non-verbal dialogue, inviting, mentoring, teaching, and engaging the individual in a safe and loving learning environment.

Gentle Teaching at Globe Star is the heart of their Quality of Life Model™ of services, mentoring a spirit of gentleness and guiding others in personal growth and in exploring and discovering value and meaning that enriches one’s quality of life (with help or necessary supports).

With a framework of Gentle Teaching, mentoring a spirit of gentleness values and protects the relationship dynamic that anchors one’s social-emotional environment to unconditional acceptance (“safe and loved”). This foundation invites one’s awareness, engagement, and growth in contentment and interdependence while celebrating togetherness, companionship, and a sense of community.



For More Information:

<http://globe-star.org/>

<http://qualityoflifeinstitute.org/>

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